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ABSTRACT

A discussion of bilingualism and second language learning distinguishes three types of bilingualism, namely, compound, coordinate, and sub-coordinate. A compound bilingual is an individual who learns two languages in the same environment so that he/she acquires one notion with two verbal expressions. A coordinate bilingual acquires the two languages in different contexts (e.g., home and school), so the words of the two languages belong to separate and independent systems. In a sub-coordinate bilingual, one language dominates. As illustration, language development is examined in case studies of the following Italian/English bilingual children in Italy: (1) a two-year-old whose Italian father uses both languages and whose English mother uses mostly English; (2) two sisters aged five and nine whose parents are Italian but who have always attended English-language schools; and (3) two Italian teenage boys whose mother has always spoken English to them and who have always attended English-language schools. The successes and problems faced by the children and their parents in developing bilingualism are discussed. It is concluded that in addition to biological predisposition, motivation and context play a significant role in bilingual development, and that overall, the bilingual experience is enriching. (MSE)

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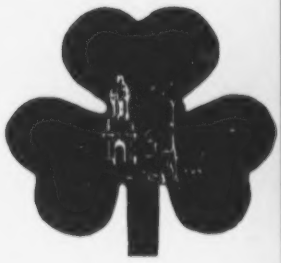

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THREE TYPES OF BILINGUALISM

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Introduction

In this paper we aim to make a difference between bilingualism and second language learning,which in our opinion are two different matters,but meanwhile they can both benefit from the experiences of each other.

In so doing we also have to consider some aspects of first language acquisition,then problems related to the critical period and also problems of lateralization.

We want to stress that the stimuli offered by a rich environment are essential and necessary means in developing both language and cognition.

We have analysed language development in a two year old child-we have been following him since he was eighteen months-who is stimulated by the whole environment a great deal.

He lives in Italy,his father is Italian and speaks sometimes in English and sometimes in Italian;his mother is English and she also speaks both languages,but she uses English most of the time.

Also we have been following two girls,they are sisters,the eldest is nine years old,the youngest is nearly six;their parents are Italian and they live in Italy,but the two girls attended an English kindergarten when the eldest was three years old and the youngest only two;now they both attend a British school in Italy.

There are also two other boys,whose parents are Italian,they live in Italy but their mother knows English and she has always spoken to them in English .They attended the same school as the girls and now Ralfi has graduated at the American High School and attends both the American and the Italian High School for Interpreter and translator.Roby is in the 11th grade of the American High School.

By considering these cases we have concluded that beside biological predisposition also well motivated context has played a great role in developing linguistic data.

The naturaless typical of a spontaneous situation of early bilingualism might be an essential detail to be followed even during the more formal context in which second language learning is developed.

The definitions given by different authors on bilingualism cover a wide area which has two extremities;on one side there are those researchers(Titone - Weinreich) who consider bilingual a person able to speak correctly two languages without transferring words from one system into another,on the other side there are other researchers who say that even the knowledge of one skill in a second language enables the person to become bilingual.

For these reasons we consider "bilingualism"a general and a wide term

with many implications within it,since we have to distinguish various kinds and various degrees of bilingualism.

S.Romaine focuses on the vastity concerning the study of bilingualism and she explains how the "research in this field is of interests to linguist and other,such as psychologists and educators"(1).

The author also says that it could be even included in the study of the problems concerning second language acquisition.
"The study of the acquisition of proficiency in another language is generally regarded as the province of a separate subdiscipline called second language acquisition"(2).

So there might be an ideal and hypothetical bilingual,all depends on how we evaluate this term.

Weinreich's view on bilingualism stresses that "the ideal bilingual switches from one

language to another according to appropriate changes in the speech situation (interlocutors,topics,etc.) but not in an unchanged speech situation"(3).

Bloomfield consider bilingualism as the ability to speak two languages perfectly"the native like control of two languages"(4).

Titone says that bilingual is that person who can speak a second language without paraphrasing his/her mother tongue.

"Il vero bilinguismo importa non solo il dominio strumentale di due codici linguistici,ma più profondamente,il possesso altamente specializzato di due sistemi di pensiero e quindi di due culture. Il vero bilinguismo è insieme biculturismo"(5).

These definitions focus on the perfection of knowledge of two systems while other authors(Macnamara),as we have already said,include within bilingualism even those persons who possess only a minimal competence in one of the four language skills(6).

Generally those people started learning a foreign language in a formal context and also when they were adults.

Finally, even those who speak the standard language as well as the dialect of the country in which they live,are considered bilinguals.

"Even monolingual communities are not homogeneous since there are usually regional,social and stylistic varieties within what is thought of as one language"(7).

If we regard as bilingual even a person who has a certain knowledge in a foreign language,then we should distinguish among different degrees of knowledge in the second tongue.These problems are, in our opinion,more related to the field concerning second language acquisition than to the field of bilingualism.

In fact the person involved might show various levels of proficiency in oral or written skills.

Very often an adult learner shows a better command in the written system,while he is weaker in the oral language,in which there are also evident interferences from the pronunciation of his mother tongue.
S.Romaine brings the example of the novelist J.Conrad,who had excellent command of written English but apparently always spoke this language with a strong Polish accent.

This is generally the case of an adult learner who becomes able to write a grammatically correct piece of language but he shows some difficulties in carrying on even an everyday conversation with a native speaker.

The language he has faced is a formal language learned in a formal context;by studying the foreign tongue he has acquired more grammatical competence than informal performance.

We should also consider that some persons learn a foreign language for specific

purposes and for these reasons they become skillful in one particular area neglecting the whole aspect of the system.

In our opinion those people do not belong to the field of bilingualism,but surely to that of second language learning.

Furthermore learning a language for specific purposes is a matter which concerns adult people and not children.

We consider bilingual only those people who have learned a second language and a second culture before puberty,preferibly in the early childhood,so that they can perceive even the smallest implications; those which permit them to have quite a balanced command in both languages with only a few interferences.

They are also able to face the four skills switching from one language into another according to the people they are talking to and according to the situation in which the speech act is taking place.

There is another point to be considered for maintaining a certain balance between the two languages;in fact there should be enough and continuous stimuli in both situations so that the subject has the chance to be provoked in the production of the two languages,which should cover the four abilities in such a way that the two systems are faced in formal as well as in informal environment.

This seems to happen for those children who have learned the first language part in the home environment within the contacts with their mother and part at school,while the second language has been learned from their father and the outside context.

We also consider balanced bilinguals those children who have first faced the language of their parents and that of the context until they were three or four and then,they have acquired a second language within a school environment which uses the foreign language as vehicular language.

Since there are different ways of approaching two languages the literature distingueshes three types of bilingualism: compound,coordinate and sub-coordinate.

A compound bilingual is that person who learns two languages in the same environment so that he acquires one notion with two verbal expression;in the brain there is a fused representation of two languages which are interdependent.

For instance the child acquires simultaneously the concept of "eyes"and he answers in both languages according to the system in which it has been uttered the question.At least there might be a fused syntactical system at the beginning and the child might say "i eyes"when answering in English or"uccelli there"when answering in Italian.

The two languages are learned in parallel and the child knows that to one notion correspond two phonological realizations.

A coordinate bilingual is instead a person who acquires the two languages in different context,for instance one at home and the other at school,so that the words of the two languages belong to two separate systems which are independent. Each word belongs to one specific concept and has its own meaning.

Initially the child develops one system,then he builds up a second system and at last he operates the two in parallel.

At the beginning when the child is forced in the school environment to use English he mixes up Italian and English,even transforming some Italian words on the English model"the tavol is round".

Weinreich distinguishes another type of bilingualism which he calls sub-coordinate and it occurs when one language predominates on the other.

In this case the person interprets words of his weaker language through the words of his stronger language;"the dominant

language acts as a filter for the other"(8).

Among the many distinction between bilingualism and second language learning we should also focus on another difference which is based for the former on the fact that the acquisition is spontaneous and natural,raised by the context,while the latter derives from the subject's motivation.

So we have a spontaneous bilingualism and a conscious bilingualism,which is more near to the problems concerning second or foreign language learning.

In spontaneous bilingualism the learner has access to the target language in the course of everyday communication within the environment.The sound of the language or languages are embedded in a context and the child's task seems only to extract from this original material the rules which govern the systems he is coming across.

On the other hand during a guided learning process such material is well organized and it is supplied by regular phases which try to present the easiest and the most common notions before the most difficult and rare ones.

Nowadays,even though grammar is not formally taught and it is included deductively during communicative acts,very often a great deal of attention is given to some aspects of morphology,such as inflection of irregular verbs, plurals, comparatives etc. .

The second language learner has to think on language structures,while a first language or a bilingual child generalizes the rules and applies them to the whole category.

For instance,while an adult learner soon makes a distinction between regular and irregular verbs,a child applies the construction of the past regular verbs to all the verbal category.

He produces"goed"instead of"went","comed" instead of "came"and so on(9).

First language acquisition is an intrinsic component of a child's overall cognitive and social development,whereas second language learning does not need to develop cognition and certain cultural details even if he had to adjust his new knowledge to his past experience.

Another important difference between spontaneous and formal learning regards pronunciation.

In fact a child acquiring two languages does not have phonological interferences between the two systems while an adult learning a second language resembles a native pronunciation.

That is not to say that it is impossible for him to achieve a perfect intonation,but in order to produce utterances without any native inflection the learner must follow very specialized steps.

We should also consider that there are not only differences but also similarities between first and second language acquisition(10).

First language acquisition is intimately bound up with the chils's cognitive and social development,in fact the child acquires simultaneously the language and its cultural data so that he also learns to become a social member of its own community.

This acquisition happens gradually and very often the child,even though he is able to produce correct sentences,does not perceive the inner meaning of them.Those utterances might also have a different value for him,different from the same structures uttered by an adult.

An example comes from words such as "yesterday","tomorrow" or expressions related to time.

If the child has not yet acquired the notion of categories related to

time,space,modality,causality it confuses the terms connected to them.

In those cases it is the context which clarifies the meaning of the utterances and meanwhile it also influences the syntactic construction of the sentences.

For this reason any language is context-dependent and this is more evident when it is necessary to use deictic terms, such as "I","here","now","there";in fact any time they occurr,they might refer to totally different persons,things or circumstances.

They are linked to the person who is speaking,the place where somebody is speaking,the time when the speech act is taking place,the person to whom the speaker is talking and so on.

When learning a second language the adult has to acquire not only the new lexis,but also the principles on which deictic terms are based.

Languages vary the semantic value of deictic terms and a literary transposition from one language into another is not always possible and satisfactory.

For example while in English we have only "here" and"there",in Italian we have four terms"qui","qua","lì","là",which might vary according to the expression used.

A child has to come across those principles related to its own mother tongue for the first time when acquiring the principles related to its own system; a bilingual child faces them simultaneously mixing them while the second language learner, has to adjust the ones he already possesses to the mechanism of the new tongue.

Another important difference between a child and an adult is based on the fact that while a child becomes a socially accepted person mostly through language,an adult may oppose resistance towards the foreign language because he feels he may loose his own social identity while learning another means of communication.

Instead,similarity between first and second language acquisition regards the

intensity of exposure to language which is a necessary feature for improving the command of verbal communication.

In fact when teaching a foreign language both teachers and pupils should realize that they need time and a lot of practice.

They should think that first language acquisition is neither as easy nor as quick as one tends to assume,especially if we consider that a child is exposed to language for about six or seven hours a day.

For this reason the teachers should provide their students with many occasion as possible for producing a contextual and a spontaneous language.

Other important questions related to language acquisition are those connected to the age of learning and the development of the brain.

The"critical period" or the age before puberty seems to be the best time for acquiring languages.Studies on aphasic

population have revealed that after that period it is very difficult to recover the verbal communication (11).

Lenneberg developed the theory of the critical period for language acquisition and he suggested that between the age of two and puberty the human brain shows such a plasticity which allows a child to acquire all the languages he is exposed to. But we should admit that it is possible to learn another language after the critical period even though we should recognize that it would be easier to acquire it before puberty.

Because of this biological distinction first and second language acquisition are viewed as two separate processes.

While the child is more eager to learn ,an adult is less willing to give up his well-established social identity so that the adult learner if not well motivated might oppose a certain resistence when acquiring

a new language which consequently should mean a new behaviour.

Suitably motivated adults may achieve a good acquisition,very similar to a native speaker,but in order to achieve such perfection the student not only needs to be highly motivated but also he must follow a precise methodology which focuses on phonetic and phonological details.

As we have already said,biological factors help the acquisition of languages before puberty,so that it is evident that when two languages are approached at that age the subject acquires them spontaneously and very well.

Language acquisition is also linked to lateralization,which seems to affect the brain in different degrees according to a child learning its mother tongue,a bilingual child,an adult learning a foreign language,and the age of the acquisition.

"As far as bilinguals are concerned,three hypothesis about lateralization have

received some support.One is that left hemispheric dominance applies to both languages.A second proposes weaker left lateralization for language in bilinguals ,while a third maintains that there is differential lateralization for the two languages"(12).

Concerning bilingualism there are many different theories which are against or in favour of this approach.

At the beginning of the century the studies concerning bilingualism proved that bilingual children were inferior to monolinguals (D.J.Saer 1923,J.C.G.Seidl). But we should consider that those experiments did not take into any account either the social class or the psychological emotion of the bilingual children,since those studies were related mainly to the immigrant communities.

Nowadays there are more authors (Peal, Lambert, Balkan, Carringer, Genesee,Tucker)

who consider bilingualism a situation which stimulates intelligence,cognition and a good behaviour.

It seems as if "bilingualism promotes creative thinking...that exposure to two languages accelerates the child's ability to de-center...".

The connection betweewn bilingualism and the social context of acquisition is a particularly important point to bear in mind when evaluating the more recent research demonstrating a positive advantage to bilingualism.It is surely a significant factor in the superior ability shown by many of the bilingual children to be discussed in ch.5,(...)who were given extraordinry amounts of attention by their parents in a rich linguistic environment in order to facilitate the children's acquisition of two languages(...) socio - economic status is an important variable.In most of the studies showing negative

effects of bilingualism, the subjects are selected from the lower social class and then often compared with monolingual children of a higher social status" (13).

Examples of bilingualism

Steven

Now that we have given general comments on bilingualism,on first and second language acquisition,we might examine in detail the linguisic development of five children we have already announced which belong to simultaneous bilingualism.

The two year child,Steven,belongs to type 1,according to S.Romaine's classification; in fact the language of one of the parents is the dominant language of the community,even if the parents do not use the strategy of"one person one language",but as we told before,they sometimes mix the language.

The father uses Italian more often while the mother uses English more.

Vivienne gave up her job to look after her baby who was born after nine years of marriage.

She stimulates her child very much by

reading him stories,nursery rhymes,songs and trying to let him repeat and sing them.She also aske him to tell her the names of some pictures and of the parts of his body both in English and in Italian.

At the age of eighteen months Steven knew the numbers up to ten and he was starting putting two words together."Which number comes after one?" asked Vivien and Steven promptly answered :"Two".

When he was twenty months old he was acquiring deictic words so very often he used " down" and "there".

At that age he spoke English as his main lamguage,and he pronounced very clearly expressions like"cup of tea","Oh dear","Hallo " and "ciao".He was also beginning to put three or four words together,but it was very difficult to understand what he wanted to say.

The intonation of these long sentences was perfect,so that when his mother repeated them,they appeared to have been

pronounced with the right English intonation.The word"helicopter"was also not very clearly uttered ,but after Vivienne's repetition,we could realize that the intonation pattern was correct.

Intonation seemed to be the first step he had achieved and it was based on the English system.

At twenty-one months he knew quite a lot of words mainly in English and he repeated everything he listened to.

He could say clearly :" carrot","car", "train","bed","door",expressions like:"kick the ball",open the door","out of door",he already knows most of the animals and what they say as well as long words like"giraffe" and "tortoise".

Steven belongs to a very good family;his parents are very intelligent and they do care about him greatly.

They are very responsible and they are determined to let him become a bilingual subject for many reasons.

First of all neither of the two wants to renounce to his/her own language,secondly they think that being bilingual,if the child accepts this state,develops cognition and stimulates intelligence;thirdly they are aware that knowing two languages will have practical future advantages.

Notwithstanding this favourable attitude towards bilingualism,they watch Steven's linguistic development very carefully in order to see if he is balanced enough for coping with two systems.

Steven seems to accept bilingualism very well,and now that he is 27 months old he is in a phase in which he fuses the two systems and has improved his lexis and his structures in both languages very much.

"...children raised bilingually generally have fused systems in the earliest stages,but later develop distinct linguistic systems for the two languages(14).

Steven knows very well the pronoun "I", the defitite and indefinite article, and he says:"Mummy I want a drink"or "I like Geppina"(the dog)or "everything in the box",he sings the nursery rhymes "Jack and Jill" and "Wee Willy Winky";while he utters them he also mimic them.

He knows many words in both the languages such as "shoes","slippers","hands","nose", "eyes","mouth","teeth","hankerchief","ball", "light","door"(the window is a door for Steven),"birds", while he knows only the English words for "trousers" and " small chair". But the Italian "sediolina" is a difficult notion for acquiring in English, since we have two words in English "small chair" and one word in Italian.
As soon as we told Steven that "la sua sediolina era vicino al muro"(his small chair was near the wall),he immediately went near it and said:" my small chair" When his mother said in Italian "dov'è la

sediolina di Steven?" he went near it and while sitting on it he answered "sediolina here".

It is also a very common phenomenon in Steven to answer with the main word in the language he has been addressed while he uses deictic words or deteminants in the other language.For instance wnen his mother asks him:"dove sono gli uccelli?"(where are the birds)he answers:"uccelli there",or "dove sono gli occhi?(where are your eyes)he answers : "occhi there",or "dov'è la luce (the light),"luce there".

Conversely,if the question is in English :"what are those"the answer will be "i ballons","i teeth",but when someboby asks him "how are you?"he always answers in Italian "sto bene"(I am well).

He does not yet distinguish the persons of the verb and he says:"Mammy do dinner".

From the psychological point of view Steven is quite a balanced boy ,who at this

stage has gone through two phases ,in fact before he spoke mainly English with only "yes" and "no" in Italian,while now he has added more words in Italian which he fuses with the English system.

Fulvia and Carla

The other two girls,Fulvia and Carla are included in none of the six types of bilingualism as evidenced by S.Romaine,since their parents are Italian,they live in Italy ,they do not know English at all,they are a typically Italian family,but they sent their daughters to an English kindergarten at the age of three for Fulvia and two and half for Carla.Now the two girls attend a British school for the children of the British community in Italy.

Fulvia and Carla knew only Italian until nearly three and they started English with the teachers and the children of the playgroup.

They reacted very well to the new environment and soon started learning words which they told to their parents,forcing them to learn some English.Very often at home Fulvia asked for the meaning of new words not realizing that their parents did not know that language.

At the kindergarten they had to colour many pictures which had the name written underneath and also they had to connect the first letter ,isolated in a circle,to the corresponding object.

Very often Fulvia wrote Italian words near English under the pictures cut from a magazine and stuck on a sheet of paper.

Furthermore,she learned in both languages the days of the weeks,the months of the year and the names of the seasons.
But she learned only in English some nursery-rhymes as for instance"1,2 buckle my shoes"and "Humpty Dumpty".

At the end of the first year at kindergarten she started to write the letters of the alphabet by following small arrows one after another.
Also the numbers were written with dots which she was supposed to connect;the same technique was used to let her learn how to write her name,which she had to copy from the one written by the teacher.

She learned all the parts of flowers and trees and those of the body through pictures from a magazine.

By following this methodology at the end of this first year at kindergarten she knew the numbers one to twelve ,she had a good command of the pencil and she knew a total of about 100 words.

As we have already said in this first year we find the English name and the Italian correspondent,for most of the words.

In 1984 she attended the second year at kindergarten and by following the same techinque of the preceeding year she added no more than 44 words,but this time she had learned to write her name properly and also some words.

For these two years Fulvia had a formal approach only in English while Italian continued to be the home and environment informal communication.

When Fulvia was six years old ,she started formal education in Italian while English had already achieved an acceptable level.In November 1986 she wrote on occasion of Halloween Day:"A will put my spell Lizar blood to make it more juicy.

I will put in my spell frogs legs to make it more horrid and teasty.

Then I will put skeletons head to make it more magic.and it will make brawn monsters."

At that time Fulvia was at the British School but also Italian had achieved a good level and she writes:"adesso vi racconto come era la casa di Canhdy aveva due camere da letto poi teneva una specie di battone che girava e poi quando girava usciva il bagno e un cavallo e poi cera una camera da letto..."It is worthwhile noting that when she writes in Italian she writes with Italian handwriting style and she is not influenced by the English style even though she started writing in English before Italian .

We should also note that except for a few difficult words like"c'era",which she wrote "cera",there are no spelling mistakes in Italian but we know that this is a phonetic language.

While in English we note a balanced progression without huge gaps between one month and another,in Italian we see that while in January 1986 she is still writing the months of the year and short sentences like:"Fulvia e Carmela sono nate nel mese di Novembre,Corinne e Carla sono nate nel mese Luglio",in November she was able to write the composition we examined before.

There is an interference error in the preceeding sentence,it refers to November which in Italian is written with a capital letter like in English.

In July 1987 she was able to write full stories both in English and in Italian and she kept the two languages separate both in linguistic structures and in handwriting.

"You usually see scacrow in field.

A scacrow is made of straw and hay.

A scacrow suppose to be a man.

A scacrow stands so strait because he has got to fraiten all the birds..."

The story goes along for three quarters of a page and except for some spelling mistakes ,which are common to children of that age ,since English is not a phonetic language,the sentences seem quite correct.

In September 1988 she writes:

"Once upon a time there was a little villiage.

In this villiage there lived a king.

The king had a sword and he was very nice.

One day he said a will Lel oll the people in this villige yous my sword for one day.

So the people in that villiage had the sword.

The firsman thout a lot with his wife.

Then he said "I wood like to have a casel.."

She continues for nearly two pages and sometimes the words spelt wrongly are written correctly in the next page.

At eight years old,when she is preparing with a private teacher for the exams for class four of the Italian school,she writes a composition where she compares two important cultural data related to the educational system of Italy and England and she openly affirms to prefer the British system of education .I would also say that while her English handwriting is clear and clean the Italian copybook are a bit careless.

"...Alla scuola italiana io vedo e sento che si picchiano fra loro e a me questo non piace affatto.Alla scuola italiana le aule non sono piene di colore solo qualcuna tiene i disegni attaccati al muro.E perciò quando entro io mi sento subito a disaggio. E unaltra cosa che io noto sempre moltissimo e che quando facciamo lezzione non possiamo parlare.

Cioè nel senso che alla scuola inglese noi possiamo discutere fra noi del lavoro e

dell'esercizio che stiamo facendo.Invece alla scuola inglese le aule sono coloratissime.....Alla mia scuola non esiste nemmeno che ci picchiamo forse litighiamo ma mai mai mai picchiarci....."

In this composition there are no more interference mistakes and " italiano," "inglese"are not written with capital letters while there are errors which are common also to Italian children and which reflect some Italian non-phonetic sounds:"disaggio-disagio","unaltra-un'altra" "lezzione-leziohe".

Now Fulvia is ten years old and she writes correct English and correct Italian,she also talk good English with an English intonation and good Italian with an Italian accent.

She separates the two languages and her behaviour develops according to the situation in which she has to act.

Her little sister Carla is following the

same system of education ;she attends the second form of the same elementary British school,but it seems that her Italian is much influenced by English.She started writing in English last year while she is starting formal Italian only now.
Her Italian handwriting follows the English style and is always clean and clear.

Carla gained 75 words between the age of four and five but she filled many sheets with letters and she worked a great deal with colours and she shaped many figures.It seems as she has followed a more natural aprroach to the formal language than her sister.

Ralfi and Roby

Now we can analyze the development of the writing system of two other subjects,they are two boys Ralfi and Roby.

They both started the same play group but in different classes when they were with their family in Essex.

They belong to type five since their parents are both Italian,but their mother always talked to them in English and they made many trips to Great Britain when they returned to Italy.

The children knew English very well since their mother had always spoken in English to them and they also had had contacts with English baby sitters who had taught them stories and nursery - rhymes.

During their firs stay in England Ralfi was five and Roby was 2.3 so that they had the opportunity to face not only the language but also the culture of that country.

They did not seem shocked at the new environment since they already knew the language.

During their stay in Colchester something amazing happened.When they were in Italy they talked English only with English people but they talked Italian to each other.

After three months in Essex they started to talk in English to themselves and to each other when they played together.The whole family talked in English also because the father had started classes in that language. The children enjoyed their stay which lasted more than six months.

When they came back to Italy the academic year was almost finished but Ralfi went to the American Montessori Kindergarten until June.

At last he spoke English quite perfectly and when the new academic year started he attended the British school where he was in class 1 from September to December.

After Christmas he went into class 2.When his mother asked him if he was sorry to leave hiS teacher and friends he ,showing confidence in himself,answered that he was happy because it meant he was good enough for a further class.

At that time he wrote sentences and made many drawings.

"Tim is fourth in line";

"He is therr in line";

"Pete is between Bob and Sam";

"Three wisemen came".

He filled in many spelling and handwriting books and he always wrote with pencils.
He had not started studying Italian yet and English was his formal first language.

In class 2 in January he could write:

"There is a lighthouse in this picture";

"There is a tractor in this picture",

"That ia are car";

"A wich makes spels and I had same sweets I go through the door".

In this phase we can see that the sentences are short but correct and the only errors regard spelling because they reflect pronunciation.

The next composition is short but correct he started using the full stop and some sentences are connected with "and".

"One day Peter gaid a balloon.and if fleu ewey and it stak on a tree .and he climed up on the tree and got the balloon again."

The structure is correct,it is fluent spoken English and does not seem to reflect any Italian construction.When Ralfi is in class 3 his composition are very well constructed and there are also subordinate clauses and long paragraphs.Here is one example :

"If you wish to write quickly and well you must hold your pencil lightly and sit propoly at your desk so that your hand and arm can move Freely and easily across the page.I said this to Peter but he is no correct".

These resembles some notes for handwriting and apart from a few spelling mistakes and a capital letter used incorrectly everything seems to have improved greatly.

Now we have two extracts from two compositions when Ralfi attended class 4;again the paragraphs are well constructed.There are full stops and capital letters and also for the first time a question mark.

In the second composition we note that the spelling mistakes reflect the Italian pronunciation ,but not the Italian writing style which in general is more formal.

"SPACE"

One day I went in my space ship.I was a mail away from the earth.Then I got out of my space ship.All around me there was no sign of life.

Suddenly I felt something that got by the leg and I frze in my tracks.Then I terned back my head but I saw a boy like me.

Then the boy like me said can we be friends?I said yes....."

"MY ESCAPE"

One day I traid to exscape from a streinjily wall made prison.

Whene I planed to exscape I herde gards tolking.

I sow from a hol in the hut.

I sow a man I sutnaly recaniisd him from the shoes he had."

This last composition is surely a careless one and the boy who is more relaxed adds an "e" to "when"and "heard"which is the undistingueshed sound Italians make when pronouncing English.

He also writes English as if it were a phonetic language.

The comment of the teacher was :"lots of careless mistakes".He did not realize that those careless mistakes depended not only from the fact that he was not very well concentrating well but also that he had been influenced by the Italian language.He had always considered Ralfi English and not a bilingual subject.

We might stress that every year the children and the family used to spend at least three months in Great Britain and during that time Ralfi and Roby regularly attended English state schools.

They went to the the "Sacred Heart "in Putney and to the Essendine school in Maida Vale.

From their compositions we could note that interferences depended on the place where they lived.

For examples after a long stay in England they were influenced by English when writing in Italian and it was the reverse when they had to write in English after a long time spent in Italy.

We have another good composition which merits reading.

"I am going to be a doctor when I am grown up because I want to help people from dying .And help people from dying from a bad infection and a bad temperature".

In class 5 Ralfi wrote correctly both from the point of view of spelling and structure and there were enough subordinates which make the clauses more satisfactory.

Even here the whole piece of writing does not reflect the Italian style,since when he had to write in Italian he changed the style and followed the Italian system,which is more elaborate than the English style.

" The Dormitorio

Yesterday we went to a Dormitorio.

When we got there we went up a lot of stairs,then we went in the kitchen.There were 86 chairs and 14 tables.....

We gave them a lot of food,the food we gave them would only feed half of the people in the Dormitorio.

Before the people were 700 but now they are 200 or 300 because the earthquake dameged a part of the Dormitorio....."

" A ship in danger

We were in the middle of Summer holidays and we decided to have trip to our friends in China.We had to go by ship because there weren't any aeroplanes so we got our things and got a ship that went to China ....."

Up to class 5 Ralfi used pencils for writing in English while he used pens for writing in Italian.The Italian style of writing sometimes resembled the English one while most of the times it was perfectly Italian.

When Ralfi writes in Italian there are again interferences from English spelling and not from the grammatical construction of the sentence.

In November 1980 when he was nine years oldhe wrote a composition called"Pioggia in città".

"Da tre giorni piove senza sosta.L'acqua precipita sonante sui tetti,corre a rivoli nelle strade lashando i sassi puliti e

luchenti.La gente è nervosa e si guarda intorno;quando passano le auto si sposta verso i muri per non bagnarsi....."

He had troubles with the words which needed the apostrophe,then with double letters,and with the sounds "ci","gi", chi", "chi","gli","gni" and "gne".

BUt after many exercises he improved and realized that the ambiguity derived from the fact that he was not able to separate the two languages and connect them to two separate systems.

After two years he had overcome these problems and he could write properly .

".....dopo la cena io e i miei cugini abbiamo acceso i bengala e dopo abbiamo giocato a carte.....

A casa avevo conservato delle bottigline con dentro i coriandoli.....ho scelto la felicità per me e per tutti gli altri.....

.....Lunedi alla festa della scuola Massimo si era mascherato da donna.....Poi con la stella filante ha detto ch'era un pesce.

During the years spent at the British school Raifi and Roby had an Italian private teacher who prepared them for the exams at the Italian school every June,since the English certificates were not recognized by the Italian government.

They worked a lot but they preferred to go on with the British system even if many people talked ironically with them about this decision.

At eleven years old Ralfi's parents decided to send him to an Italian " Scuola Media",since they thought that it was too much work to continue with the two systems. But he psychological results were disastrous and after one year Ralfi went to an Anglo American school where he stayed until he was seventeen years old.

We can see from the next composition that when he was in the Italian school everyone took advantage of him by reproaching him for the fact that he had attended the English and not the Italian school.

The Italian teacher of Italian psychologically hurt him greatly and Ralfi decided not to go to that class any longer.We have evidence of his reactions by looking through his composition.

".....Il primo giorno di scuola conobbi la professoressa di Italiano della scuola svizzera di Napoli.Lei mi maltrattava sempre e così anche gli altri professori.Lei più di tutti e mi diceva:"Invece di studiare alla scuola inglese avresti dovuto studiare a quella italiana"Forse sono tutti invidiosi che io so parlare bene l'inglese e l'italiano e loro no.Spero che questo non accadrà con i futuri professori e dopo questa brutta esperienza ho capito molte altre cose."

Ralfi is eighteen years old now;during his life he has received stimuli in both languages from the formal and informal point of view. At the moment he attends the American University,the Italian School for

Interpreter and translators and he is also preparing the Italian final exam at high school.

He is a mature boy ,well balanced psychologically and linguistically and all those years spent between two languages and two cultures seem to have given him great security from the sociological psychological and educational point of view.

Roby has followed an academically similar process,even if he started playgroup at 2.6 kindergarten at 3.6.and the first junior class at the British school when he was only 4.3

From the psychological point of view he did not suffer the difficulties of his brother,since the experiment had already traced its road thus he did not go to the Italian school but had only private teachers for preparing the external exams.

Maybe,because he started formal education very early,he was able to separate the two systems soon and in his compositions there are no interferences between the two languages.

In 1978 when he was 4.10 he wrote in one of the news:

"Yesterdei we brot my brada at Macas house and we left my broda at Macas house and we went to hv a wolk".

"The sun shine during the day.

we find shells in the seashore".

In the following year in October we have another composition where aolso there are some spelling mistakes.

"Once upon a time there was to boys getting some apols from the trees.and the captain sow the to boys picin apols from the trees.

As Ralfi did at that age Roby too spells most of the words as if English were a phonetic language and by comparing their

compositions with those of monolingual English children we find the same kind of errors.

Laura:"A man colled William Walker was a fossil collecter.One day when he was out lookin for fossils in a claypit.William Walker faund a stone.....

Charles :"Tomoro my to auntys and my grandad and his girlfrend are leaving.They caul them .....

Tim:"On Saturdey I went to Edenland it was fan at first we went in the misterous house it was scary .Then we went in the logs at the bit were the logs went dawn.....

In another composition he shows a high standard language and he uses also the genitive case even if he does not put the apostrophe.

1981

"Yesterday I went to my friends house to have lunch and we ate rice and my friends dad said we found anything inside the rice

and if we gesed what was inside the rice.But we dident ges....."

In class 5 Roby had achieved an unexpected maturity and his essays are nearly two pages long ,there are subordinate clauses,proper capital letters,correct punctuationand only sometimes we find "our" written as "are".

Here are some" news" on a trip to Rome:

"This morning we all woke up at 7.00 o'clock,we had room inspection at 7.30. We got 6 points,not much,then at 8.00 o'clock' we had our breakfast.....

.....After that we went to the Pantheon.It was very nice and it had a hole at the top,so that when it rained they closed the door and the rain didn't went in.....

If we compare Roby's compositions with those of English monolinguals of the same age there is no difference among them.

Nicky:"The castle is located in the town

of Bari. It was built by the sea for defence reason's. The walls are one to two metre's thick and have bastion's for deflecting missiles.....

Mark:"...People think the shape has something to do with dead people being buried there.If you do not have a roof you do not have to pay taxex.....

Louisa:"....There is a well in the courtyard in case of a water shortage.There is no wall facing the see because the see protected the castle.

These are only a few examples of Roby's English writing and we can realize that the interferences with Italian are not so important;this might have happened because he faced bilingual education more relaxed and without indecision from his parents.

Also with the Italian environment he shows a good attitude and when he describes his teachers in general he says that the best one is the private teacher of Italian.

This person helped Ralfi, Roby and other Italian children who attended the British School a lot,and he tried to balance the two languages even introducing some English during his lessons in the Italian language.

Here is what Roby writes at nearly ten years old.

"Ricordo con molto piacere i maestri che ho avuto in questi anni ma soprattutto sono sicuro che ricorderò con più piacere il mio maestro Buccino.Egli infatti ha avuto molta pazienza e con molta cura mi ha preparato al difficile compito degli esami della scuola Italiana.

The only interference mistake we can note in this composition is the capital letter for the adjective "italiana".

Furthermore we should focus on the fact that while in the English school they used pencils during all the elementary classes,when writing for the Italian teacher they used pens.This device maybe

helped them to separate the two systems and it forced them to use two differnt styles according to the language involved.

At the moment Roby attends the 11th grade of an American High School in Italy and after having passed the final exams of the Italian Scuola Media he is now studying only for the American system and he will graduate next year when he is only nearly sixteen years old.

The children we have examined belong to a group of twenty,who in different years but with similar background attended the British school in Italy.

While the youngest still attend elementary classes,the eldest have followed different education,Two of them went to Rome to attend an English high school,Ralfi and Roby went to an American high school in Naples while others attended the Italian Liceo Scientifico or Liceo Classico.

It is evident that those who attended

English or American school have achieved a good English writing level,while the ones who attended the Italian school are superior in writing essays and compositions in that language.

We should stress that all are fluent in performing the oral language because they have maintained contacts with England or with the United States.

Of the four children examined ,Ralfi and Fulvia show more interferences between English and Italian than their brother and sister.In fact Ralfi found it difficult to write non phonetic Italian sounds and he wrote them by following the English spelling,and Fulvia wrote Italian and English words under the picture she cut from magazines.

This phenomenon does not appear in Roby's and Carla's works and it seems as if the youngest children had benefited of the experiences of their siblings.

Roby and Carla seem to gain more advantages from the fact that they are the second children in the family;they seem more confident with the languages and the environments in which the two languages develop.Furthermore they started facing the English systems of education when they were only two years old.

After this brief analysis on bilingualism we should add that these cases are all very interesting and it is also a fortune that these children could face two languages and two cultures enjoying these experiences and accepting a lot of work while preparing academically for two systems.

Only in one case we had evidence that the child did not accept bilingualism.

He was at the kindergarten ,his mother was English,he refused to answer in English and he talked only Italian.His mother had to give up with her mother tongue because her child was loosing his physiological balance because of psychological suffering.

From this analysis developed on different bilingual situations it seems as if bilingualism was a good experience with good results.In other words these parents started the bilingual adventure with great trust but also with many questions.

Now everyone seems satisfied and their children did not have troubles even if they had some problemswhichy at last they were able to face satisfactorily.

They all seem quite well balanced and the bilingual education they have faced seems to have widened their cognition.

Also they greatly enjoy going from one language and from one culture into another and they are proud to be able to fit the two context spontaneously and with great confidence.

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